1 Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

for the Sinhalese of Potuliyadde, receiving every fifth calf that is born. The community has, or recently had, ten or more head of cattle of their own and have sold bulls to the brother-in-law of our *tavalam*[1] leader for as much as 30 Rs., indeed, our *tavalam* leader stated that he had himself visited the Danigala chena and had also seen the cattle. On this occasion Kaira and his sons wore a coloured cloth as the Sinhalese do and their women wore a *kambaya* and coloured breast handkerchief. Mr Bibile was able to confirm some of these statements from his own knowledge and on making investigations among the local villagers discovered that there was a whole community living on the chena settlement, some of whom had married Sinhalese. Indeed it appeared that not only have members of this community learnt to play the part of professional primitive man, but there has even been specialisation, for as far as we could learn, the men we met at the look-out hut are those who always receive visitors or come to Bibile when sent for, while the others whom we did not see do not pose as wild Veddas. Probably the part they now play had only recently crystallised into a professional rôle, but it must be remembered that so long ago as 1863 Bailey discussing these Veddas, or their fathers, says "they were brought in from the forests to be 'looked at'" and he adds, "I never saw that contempt for money which Tennant supposes is still existing[2]."

Kovil Vanamai. In the Eastern Province in the neighbourhood of Devulani tank the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are found, this term being applied to a number of groups of Veddas living in this neighbourhood. The name Kovil Vanamai means temple precincts and seems to have arisen from there being one or more temples in this part of the country, while some of these shrines are traditionally associated with Veddas, apparently with old settled coast and village Veddas, for we have no reason to think that the ancestors of the folk we saw at Bandaraduwa, or the other wilder Veddas of fifty years ago, were in any way guardians of the temples or dependent on their bounty. Although at the present day the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are represented by scattered groups, for the most part

[1] A *tavalam* is a train of pack bulls.

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 283.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

number of these *yaku*, especially Irugal Bandar and the other Bandar, may have been introduced since Bailey's time. It is even possible that Tissahami may be responsible in part.

The reference to King Vijaya shows that Kalu Bandar has nothing to do with the primitive beliefs of the Veddas, for no Vedda knew anything of Vijaya or Kuweni.

Before describing the beliefs of the village Veddas, among whom the third stratum of thought is dominant, the condition of the Veddas of Unuwatura Bubula (who have moved there from Mudugala) must be considered and compared with those of both the wilder and the village Veddas. Many of the *yaku* of the less sophisticated communities were known to them, and some invoked by the village Veddas were also called upon at Unuwatura Bubula. Although Kande Yaka was known and considered powerful to send game and cure sickness, apparently he was no longer Lord of the Dead, as he was not invoked at the *alutyakagama* (see p. 260) to which the *Nae Yaku* were called. A structure called a *bulatyahana* was built for him and a Hindu trident as well as an *aude* was held when he was invoked. Bilindi Yaka was known, but we have no note as to whether he was considered the brother of Kande Yaka or no. Bambura Yaka and his attendants known to the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya and Uniche were unknown here. Pata Yaka (Sitala Wanniya) had been heard of but had never been invoked. The Wanegatha Yaku were of considerable importance here, they were said to be the *yaku* of long dead Veddas who had perished in their rock-shelter owing to a fall of rock. Indigollae Yaka (the attendant of Kande Yaka at Sitala Wanniya) was known here and considered extremely powerful; when really short of food, offerings are made to him and his wife Indigollae Yakini, and the shaman thrusts an *aude* into the roof of his hut and hangs on it a string of beads which are kept specially for this purpose, and then Indigollae Yaka sends game. We were told that no charm or invocation accompanied this action.

We did not realise at the time of our visit that Indigollae Yaka might be another name for Gale Yaka, but this appears not unlikely in view of information furnished by Mr Parker, and the fact that Gale Yaka was here invoked with the *Nae*

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

755 the offering is placed. The dance is held at night and continues until morning when the whole community eat the offering, though only the men dance. We were shown a pot in a small cave near the settlement which was said to be kept there purposely, and which it was stated was used for boiling rice for the ceremony.

771 177 We may now consider the religious beliefs of certain communities in which the third stratum of belief already alluded to is dominant. Such communities are the village Veddas of Uva Bintenne and those of the Eastern Province and Tamankaduwa, among all of whom the *Nae Yaku* were known and reverenced, but the great Vedda heroes have all disappeared, their place having been taken by numerous Sinhalese gods and demons. Some of the village Veddas even build temples, rough bark or [346] mud huts like their own habitations in which the various symbols of the *deviyo* and *yaku* are kept and in which the shaman dances.

Such a temple was seen at Yakure dedicated to Gange Bandar Deyo, here also were two rough stones leaning against [378] a tree on the *bund* of Yakurewaewa which were held sacred to Gane Deyo (Ganesa).

At a place called Nadena, where there were said to be Veddas until a few years ago, on the road running inland from Patrippu in the Eastern Province, there is a temple containing an image of Ganesa and this is looked upon as a Vedda shrine. Other temples or shrines in the Eastern Province are traditionally associated with Veddas though none survive at the present day, except, we believe, at Portiv near Patrippu and at Mandur.

Village Veddas of the Bintenne.

775 115 At Dambani and the neighbouring settlements of Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the *Nae Yaku* are held to be of great importance. Reference has already been made on p. 50 to the difficulty of working with these village Veddas, and our information concerning the religious beliefs of the Dambani folk was obtained from the Arachi of Belligala; with regard to Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the little information we possess was obtained at first hand and carefully checked, and

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Mangara Deyo is invoked to protect cattle. About a month before our visit a nephew of the shaman suffered from headache and fever and woke up in the middle of the night in a great state of alarm. It was ascertained by stone augury that Mangara Deyo had sent the sickness, offerings were made to him, and the youngster speedily recovered.

There are no dances at a man's death or invocations to the spirits of the dead, nor did there appear to be any particular spirit who gave luck in hunting, indeed it seemed that game was little sought, the whole activity of the community being concentrated on cattle breeding.

The temple of Mangara Deyo is a small bare hut, with the roof projecting a few feet beyond that wall in which the door is cut. The inside of the temple is quite bare except for a narrow wooden rack about a foot wide which runs round the two side and back walls at a height of about four feet from the ground. In one corner of this was a pile of *aude* of all shapes and sizes which were said to belong to Mangara Deyo.

ROTAWAEWA.

Mr G. W. Jayawardene writes as follows concerning the beliefs of the Tamankaduwa "Veddas" described on p. 56. "They regard Adukganna Hulawali Yaka and Vedi Yaka as the important *yaku*. Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit to whom they look to be cured of sickness. When any one is ill he or she or someone on their behalf puts aside one or two cents which are wrapped in a clean piece of cloth and from each house an offering of food is made. Vedi Yaka is the spirit they look to for help in getting game. When an animal is killed the heart is taken and roasted and offered on a stick with the end split into four to hold the heart under a tree." Commenting on this Mr B. Horsburgh writes, "Adukganna Hulawali Yaka is the spirit of a Vedda who was killed by King Mahasena for refusing to leave Minneriya tank when he was going to restore it. The name Adukganna Hulawaliyaka means Hulawali Yaka who takes the *adukkuwa* or present of food (from the offering made to him). He is only seen in dreams,

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

clear what opportunities existed for obtaining it. Deer and pig would be killed and eaten, and snakes were said to be killed without a scruple though one informant denied that he would kill a cobra.

Time did not allow of any systematic study of the religion of the Verdas, but it was clear that this had been much affected by Tamil influence while yet retaining some of the more obvious outward features of the Vedda cult of the dead. Unfortunately we had no opportunity of ascertaining definitely whether the Verdas have also retained the essence of the Vedda cult, i.e. the belief in the loving-kindness and the guiding influence of the spirits of their dead, though since the leader of the dance seen at Vakarai showed the classical signs of "possession," there seems to be every reason to hold this belief at least provisionally. The dance we saw rehearsed at Vakarai was said to be performed for sickness and in thanksgiving when a good harvest had been gathered. The dance took place at night, the men dancing in relays till daylight, the women squatting on the ground, but taking no part. No food is taken during the dance, but some is placed upon the "altar" *kudaram* (lit. cage or small shed, *T*) which is eaten by all in the morning.

The temple seen at Pellanchenai, of which a rough plan is given in fig. 14, was a building some 12 feet long by about 10 broad; it faced east and the roof was carried forward for a few feet beyond the front wall in which was a door. A stout pole (marked *P*), thought to be some 30 feet long and consisting of a young tree with the bark removed, stood in front of the temple about 30 feet from the entrance. To the north of the pole and about 8 feet from it was a hole in the ground *F*, really a small well containing water, while to the south of the pole and at a distance of about 12 feet from it there was a young tree before which a small platform *T* (*kudaram*) was built, on which a rough stone rested. Some distance beyond the pole and somewhat to the south of it stood a tree *H*, apparently quite dead, with a fringe of dried leaves and small twigs round its trunk, before which were the remains of a *kudaram*; to the south-west of the pole and roughly in the position of *Y* in the plan, a limb of a tree was planted in the soil. The branches

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

346 springing from the upper end of this limb had been removed with the exception of three which were left to support between them a rough earthenware pot. The remains of a *kudaram* also existed somewhat to the south-east of the doorway about the spot marked *X* on the plan. The post supporting the weight of that portion of the roof extending beyond the door had tied round it a fringe of dried shredded coconut leaves. Within the temple stood a *kudaram* (marked *K*) behind which in one corner of the temple was a model of a sailing boat about two feet long partly square-rigged and clearly meant to imitate a European ship. The temple was for the worship of Kapalpei, Ammal and

778
776

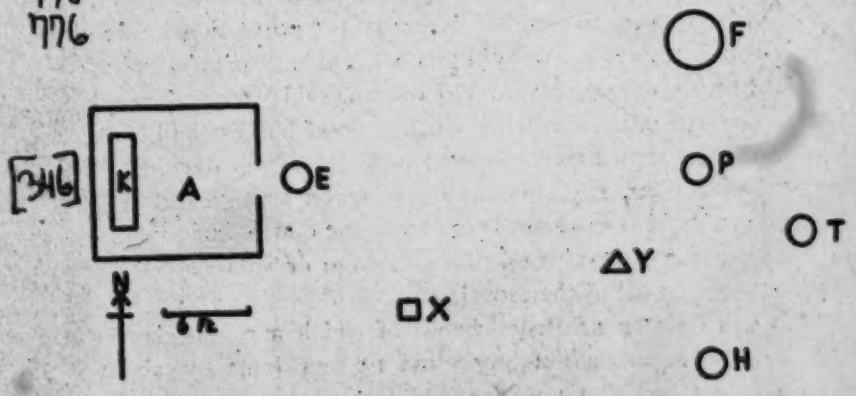

Fig. 14. Plan of Vedda temple and its surroundings.

Komara Devam. The name Kapalpei means ship-demon. We could only discover that he is regarded as the most powerful of the beings worshipped and that he is a foreigner who reached the country in a ship. Ammal is a Tamil Goddess who sends smallpox and skin disease[1].

776 We could at the time discover nothing concerning Komara Devam, though doubtless he is the same as Kumara Deva, an immigrant deity, whose characteristic weapon is a silver sword, who was one of the chief spirits invoked to remove sickness by

[1] Mr A. Barr Kumarakulasinghe tells me that there are temples to this Goddess at Jaffna, but that there are none in Batticaloa though possibly there may be some in the neighbourhood.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

no idols, offer no sacrifices, and pour no libations. They cannot be said to have any temples, for the few sticks sometimes erected, with a branch thrown over them, are, I imagine, simply to protect their votive offerings. [782] [776] [346]

They have no system of medicine, though they will accept medicine when given. In cases of sickness they sprinkle water on the patient, invoking their deceased ancestors to heal him. Sometimes they simply utter the name of spirits as they dance round the sick man. Sometimes a garland of flowers is offered to the spirit who has afflicted him.* They believe in the efficacy of what are called devil dances, but are ignorant of the art of a Kattadia, or devil dancer. I can find no trace of metempsychosis, so universal amongst Buddhists. [755] [769] [775]

I have now described what is the *actual* religious belief, if it can be so called, of the Veddahs; and it was only by dint of often repeated visits among them, and very careful inquiry, that I succeeded in obtaining the particulars I have recorded. [771] [774]

But, that at some period of their history they had some knowledge of a more "systematized" faith, their charms and invocations, some of their customs, and the very names they bear, seem conclusively to prove.

Such testimony is invaluable. For neither the inquirer, whose zeal may induce him to jump too hastily at conclusions, nor the people themselves, can distort it, or give it a strained interpretation. But this evidence all points to something long past, to a faith once, at least, familiar to them, but now forgotten. At the least, it indicates a former contact with civilisation, and proves that they have a history more full of incident than would belong to a race which was always as barbarous as it is now.†

In their charms the sun and moon are frequently invoked, although in their daily life neither luminary is respected.‡ [821]

---

* They invoke the Gal-Yakko, spirit of the rock; Weldo-Yakko, spirit of the chase; Oonapána-Yakko, of whom I have no knowledge; and the shade of their great-grandmother. They also propitiate "Maha-Yakkhini", who appears rather an evil personage. It is to her that they offer a garland of flowers. They describe her as a "foreigner", and say that they know nothing about her, but acquired their awe of her from the Singhalese. The Weddi-Yakko is known to the Singhalese; hunters offer flowers, blood, and burnt meat to this spirit, before hunting, to secure their success. Oonapána-Yakko is known to the Singhalese of the Weddirates, but I do not think he is generally known to the Singhalese.

† Vide Tennent's account of the Veddahs, especially vol. ii, part iii, chap. ix, p. 441-2. "They have no knowledge of a God, nor of a future state, no temples, no altars, prayers, or charms; in short, no 'instinct of worship' except, it is reported, some ceremonies analogous to devil worship."

‡ This occurs in several charms. The following (which, though not known to the Singhalese, as applied to *wild boars*, is identical with one known to them to drive away toothache), not only invokes the sun and moon, [789]